Flutter

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/52559320.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Charlie Countryman (2013), Adam (2009), HEU - Fandom, Hannibal Extended Universe - Fandom
Relationship:	Nigel (Charlie Countryman)/Adam Raki
Characters:	Nigel (Charlie Countryman), Adam Raki
Additional Tags:	First Dates, Nigel (Charlie Countryman) Loves Adam Raki, Will Graham & Adam Raki are Siblings, autistic character written by an autistic author, Stimming, First Kiss
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Raindrop Stories
Stats:	Published: 2023-12-26 Words: 4,182 Chapters: 1/1

Flutter

by sourweather

Summary

Nigel finds Adam entirely fascinating, and wants to learn everything about him. Including all of his quirks.

Notes

lol i wrote this fic in June but here it is! It's kind of simple but I'm pretty proud of how romantic it turned out hehe <3 enjoy!

See the end of the work for more notes

Nigel Banyai's met a lot of people in his life. He's lived in three countries, ran with dozens of crews, done business with hundreds and hundreds of pricks. So when he says that he's never met a single soul like Adam Raki, that fucking means something.

He knew straight away that Adam was special. Damn near felt fate smack him in the back of the skull with it the first time they saw each other. He'd jumped off of a subway car just to talk to him, almost getting caught in the closing doors in his desperation to not let the beautiful thing get away.

And it's only gotten clearer as they got to know each other. At first Adam was just a sweet voice and a gorgeous face, but now he's brilliant, sincere, funny in a dry way that tends to go over dumb fuckers' heads. He's *special,* something rare and fascinating that leaves Nigel feeling the best kind of confused.

So yeah, he'd be stupid not to at least take his shot with Adam. Like hell is he giving anybody else a chance to swoop in first and steal the man of Nigel's fucking dreams before he's so much as asked Adam out.

He's gonna do it fucking right this time, too. None of the drama and heartache he'd gone through with Gabi. He shows up at the planetarium at twelve-thirty sharp, because he's learned that Adam is particular about his lunch breaks. Nigel's not empty-handed, either. Brought him food like a fucking gentleman would. A chicken salad sandwich and a bag of plain chips, from the deli around the corner. Adam's usual, because he's particular about that, too. Fine by Nigel. Takes out all the guess work if Adam always likes the same things.

The girl at the front desk shoots him a knowing smile when he strides into the lobby. She's been the one working all three times he's come here. A charming little thing, with thick dark hair. "Let me guess," she says, looking at him over the lenses of her glasses. "You're here to see Adam?"

Nigel nods, and she turns her smirking face back to her computer screen. "I'd call him for you, but I'm sure he's already on his way. You know how he is. Runs a pretty tight schedule."

That makes him breathe out a laugh. "Don't I fucking know it. Why do you think I'm always coming down here on his lunch breaks? It was the only way he'd make time for me."

He'd been happy to get it, though. He would've begged Adam to spend any amount of time with him, that first day at the subway station. Nigel had suspected that Adam was trying to get away from him as painlessly as possible, when he quickly said 'You can meet me on Monday, at twelve-thirty, at Tina's Deli. Don't be late,' and shuffled onto a train. He showed up anyway, hoping beyond hope even though he would've stood himself up in a heartbeat if he'd been in Adam's shoes. But Adam was there. And he told Nigel to come back the next Monday, so he did. Simple. Fucking miraculous, but simple.

The receptionist narrows her eyes, looking him up and down. "So are you two dating, or − "

"Just friends." For now, anyway.

That smirk still won't leave her face, though. "Right."

"Something fucking amusing?"

"Nigel!"

Whatever the girl at the desk was about to say gets interrupted when Adam walks in, looking at Nigel with a bright, beautiful grin on his face. It makes his chest turn tight in an instant. Just a couple weeks ago, Adam hadn't even blinked when Nigel sat down across from him. Must be on the right track, then. "Hey, gorgeous," Nigel greets.

Adam's eyes flick over to his colleague, and Nigel follows just in time to see her lift a brow and mouth the word *'gorgeous?'* at him. His cheeks turn pink a moment later, and Nigel licks his teeth.

"I was thinking that we could have lunch outside today," Nigel continues, holding his victorious smile behind his lips as he gestures toward the door. "Bit like a picnic. What do you say?"

It catches his eye right away. Adam's smile comes back in full force, but it's his hands that Nigel can't help staring at. They stay low, near his sides, but they're… fluttering. Quick and light, like he's fanning away smoke. He's never seen someone move like that before.

He only flutters for a second or two, though. Then he's abruptly crossing his arms over his chest and looking like he's been caught trying to shoplift. His face turns even redder, he's staring at the floor. Faltering, he mutters "O- Okay, that sounds nice."

Nigel studies him for another lingering moment, trying to puzzle out what just happened, before moving for the entrance. He's still picturing the movements of the other man's hands as he holds the door open, watching Adam pass through it and out into the cheerful summer sun.

There's a couple benches right outside the building, so Nigel leads him to one of them and sets the bag in Adam's lap. Just being out in the open air makes him itch for a cigarette, but he'd learned right away that Adam didn't find the scent of smoke particularly romantic. Different strokes for different folks, Nigel reckons.

He was feeling pretty pleased with himself for this little maneuver, but all it takes is one little sigh from Adam's lips to have Nigel second guessing himself. "Nigel," he starts, and his tone is heavily apologetic. "I appreciate the gesture, but… I only really eat certain things."

His fickle pride flares back to life. Is that all? "I know that. Open it."

A cute little crease forms between his brows, and he pops the to-go container open. He looks back up at Nigel, beaming. "You remembered my order?"

He just shrugs, like it's nothing, and takes a seat at Adam's side. It's clear by his face that Adam doesn't think it's nothing.

“I − that’s very sweet, Nigel, thank you.”

“Any time.”

Adam glances sidelong at him, pausing with half of his sandwich partway to his mouth. “Really?”

There’s this earnestness that creeps into Adam’s voice from time to time that breaks Nigel’s fucking heart. Like he genuinely has trouble believing that somebody would do something as simple as buy a meal for him. It makes Nigel want to give him everything he wants, to have Adam just point at things and get them. Fuck, he’s got it bad.

“Yeah, of course. You think I come down here just to get my steps in for the day? I like spending time with you, Adam.”

Adam nods as he chews, watching people pass by on the nearby sidewalk. “Jasmine said that, too.”

“Jasmine?”

“The girl at the front desk,” he clarifies, gesturing in the direction of the Planetarium. “She likes to talk a lot, but she’s also a very good listener.”

He knows, naturally, that Adam must talk to his coworkers. And yet hearing conformation of it makes him feel strangely furious. Nigel tries to settle his blood, to pour a bucket of water over the bark of his jealousy before it can leap out and burn Adam alive. *Be a gentleman, be a fucking gentleman.* “I see.”

“Mhm, so when I went to lunch with you two weeks ago, I mentioned it to her, and she wanted to know all about you. She said − ” He pauses, swallows awkwardly. His eyes are wide, his shoulders tense. He takes a large bite of his sandwich, giving himself an excuse not to elaborate.

Nigel lifts a brow. “She said… that I like you,” he infers, slowly. “And that’s why I keep coming around?”

Adam nods sheepishly, covering his mouth with a hand as he swallows. “She seems pretty sure that you’re interested in me. Romantically.”

His body language gives Nigel less than nothing to go off of. It’s maddening and he loves it. “And what did you think about that?”

“I told her that I don’t like to make assumptions.”

Nigel gets the sense that he’s not getting anything near the full story. He narrows his eyes, watching him closely. Adam looks back, eyes landing in their favorite place to focus − the round, puckered scar on Nigel’s temple. The corner of Adam’s mouth pulls into a smile.

"...And I told her that I prefer men who are direct, so if you did want to ask me on a date, then you would have to just come out and ask me, either way."

Oh.

Well, fuck.

The first laugh bubbles out of him without his permission. Then Adam chuckles softly and it's all over from there. He can't wipe the stupid grin off his face, even as his laughter dies down. "Alright," he says at last, siting back against the bench. "Yeah, fair enough. In that case − I'd like to take you out sometime, gorgeous. Properly."

Adam sets down his food, and Nigel half-expects him to start moving his hands again. But instead he clasps them tight together, like he's holding them still, and smiles.

-

He's out of his fucking depth, that's all there is to it. That's what he's telling himself as he waits outside Adam's apartment building. Forty-five years of life experience, and he's still managed to find a situation that has him feeling completely clueless. It doesn't make any sense. He's dated plenty of people, fucked plenty more. Even loved a couple.

When it comes to Adam, though, he's got no idea how to act. It's like being a fucking teenager, like he's learning the rules of romance all over again. Hell, maybe he's just rusty. It's been a long time since Gabi kicked him to the curb, even longer since he's had to court anybody. Sure, he fucked around a lot, but the people he partied with were lucky if he even learned their names for the night. He wasn't exactly practiced in trying to go steady.

But Nigel hasn't been able to think about anybody else since he and Adam met. His entire skull has been filled to the fucking brim with those big blue eyes, those soft curls, those gentle hands. He has to get this shit right. Has to. Otherwise… well, he's not sure what he'll do. He'd really rather not find out.

He gets out of the car when Adam steps out onto the sidewalk, moving to hold the passenger's side door for him. Adam just chirps a cheerful little 'Hello, Nigel' as he falls gracefully into the seat.

"Hey, gorgeous."

Nigel doesn't start driving right away once they're both seated, taking a moment to observe the careful way that Adam pulls his seat belt over his chest and clicks it into place. Adam does everything like it's important, that's what Nigel's learned. Nothing is ever casual, it's all thought-out and worth doing right. Carries over into his words, too. Adam Raki never just *says* anything. It adds a certain gravity to him, an enormity that he seems completely unaware of.

"Where are we going?" Adam asks, and it yanks Nigel back into his body. He puts the car in drive, heading toward their destination.

“I was thinking that we could see a movie.”

Adam’s shoulders hunch a little. “Would you be okay with watching a movie at my apartment instead?” he asks. “Movie theaters always have the speakers turned up so loud, and I don’t like having to step over people’s legs, and the floors are always sticky and − why are you smiling?”

He glances sidelong at Adam, grinning almost mischievously. Maybe he’s not so clueless, after all. “You know, I had a hunch you’d say something like that. Don’t worry, I think you’re gonna like this.”

“How can you be sure?” Adam counters. “You don’t know me that well yet.”

Nigel sighs. “Tell you what: If you hate it, we’ll leave right away. Sound fair?”

He eyes Nigel warily for a moment, then relaxes into the seat. “Okay.”

Much of the car ride is peppered with conversation. Another cue that he’s doing something right. When they first met, Nigel had barely been able to get two words out of Adam. He’d mistaken it for shyness at the time, but he’s learned since that Adam isn’t shy at all. He just doesn’t give a flying fuck about other people’s comfort.

See, most people tend to fill dead air, even when they’ve got nothing to say. Reaching for any dull response they can, because even the most boring topic on earth is preferable to sitting in silence with another person. Either Adam has no sense for awkwardness or he’s just not fucking scared of it, though, because Adam only talks when he’s got shit to talk about. He won’t fake interest, won’t fight to fill the quiet. But that doesn’t mean he won’t talk.

In fact, Nigel’s found that if you get him talking about the right shit, Adam actually talks a fucking lot.

“It might seem surprising at first, considering how different the myths surrounding vampires and werewolves are, but it actually makes perfect sense when you learn that both myths can be traced to rabies.”

He’d started this particular conversation by accident, not that he’s fucking complaining. The theater is hosting some kind of themed night, all vintage shit. The choice came down to some old Audrey Hepburn flick or a classic creature feature, so he’d asked Adam if he preferred romance or horror. As it turns out, that question was enough to open the floodgates, much to Nigel’s surprise.

“See, for much of our cultural history, rabies has been mainly associated with dogs, but it actually originally came from bats.” Adam wrinkles his nose a little. “Although, vampires used to be much more closely tied to dogs and wolves than bats, too.”

“You know, I never would’ve guessed you’d be into all that horror shit.”

Adam hums. “Why not?”

Because he's too fucking adorable for it? "It just doesn't seem like it's your taste."

Adam looks out his window. The sun has set right on time, the first stars are finally peeking through. "My older brother has always been interested in horror, that's all. He listened to me talk about my interests, so I listened to him talk about his." He laughs, suddenly, clear and bright as a bell. "We used to stay up all night, watching old episodes of *The Twilight Zone* after our dad went to sleep. He taught me a lot about the genre."

Nigel smiles fondly. Christ, he's only known this guy for a month and he's already fucking smitten. He just wants to take Adam in his arms and −

"I've been talking too much, haven't I?"

"What? No, Adam, I want you to talk," he insists. "I'm getting to know you, I can't do that if you don't talk."

He nods, but it's stiff. He crosses his arms defensively again. "People usually tell me that I ramble about things too much, and it's off-putting," he confesses quietly. "I don't want you to think I'm off-putting."

"Hey."

Adam looks at his scar again, staring with an unsure look on his face. Nigel nearly fucking melts.

"What was your favorite scary movie to watch with your brother, hm?"

Just that easy, a lopsided smile blooms on Adam's face. "Well, when I was seventeen, he took me to see *Event Horizon.* We went during the day, so the theater was nearly empty. I got so scared that I jumped out of my chair."

Any further reminiscing gets cut short when Nigel pulls up to the theater, fishing his worn leather wallet out of the pocket of his jeans as they roll to a stop near the ticket booth. Adam is looking around with a spellbound expression, his eyes sparkling in the twilight.

"This is a drive-in," he says, and Nigel smirks at the wonder laced through his tone.

"Mhm. No dealing with other people, and you can set the radio to whatever volume you want. I swung by a convenience store on my way to pick you up, there's a shit ton of chips and candy in the back. Didn't know what you'd want so I grabbed a bit of everything."

And when Nigel finishes buying their tickets and looks back, Adam's doing it again. The thing with his hands. That quick, bouncy little fluttering thing. It makes Nigel's heart skip, but he makes himself look away a moment later. He doesn't want to stare, doesn't want to spook him or make him feel judged.

He can still see the eager movement in his periphery, though, and he gets the sense that it's another good fucking sign.

-

"...and when the Sojourner Rover launched, we went to the Winn-Dixie and bought one of those big sheet cakes they always have on display. It took days for us to finish it." He chuckles, eyes still glued to the stars overhead. "It's funny, I remember staring at those cakes every time we went grocery shopping. I could get one, if I wanted to. Right now. They aren't even expensive. I think a part of me feels like they're not for grown-ups, though. Like they only put them on display so that children will stare at them, like a life-sized doll in a toy store window."

Nigel sits beside him, weight braced on one palm, and listens. He knows he must be wearing the most stupid, lovesick look on his face right now. He can't make himself care.

As it turned out, Adam had already seen *The Monster that Challenged the World,* so they ended up spending the bulk of the movie talking. About the puppet in the movie, about movies in general, about anything that sparked Adam's interest. The topic of space came up, because it always did eventually when they were together. And Adam started out faltering and fearful, and Nigel told him once again that he wanted to listen, and by the time the credits rolled Adam was jumping eagerly from one topic to the next with an adorably infectious enthusiasm.

He'd planned on driving Adam home, after that. Taking things slow and all that. But instead Adam placed a pale hand on his arm and said 'Can I show you something?' And Nigel couldn't say 'Fuck yes' fast enough.

Now they're sitting in the grass together, at the crest of a small hill in the middle of a tiny vacant park. Watching the stars. Adam's watching the stars, anyway. Nigel's having trouble taking his eyes off the man beside him. He's just so… *bright.* There's this shine that comes over him, when his passion comes to life. It's fucking beautiful.

Nigel shifts, slowly, carefully. Moves to sit behind Adam rather than beside him. He weaves his arms around the other man's waist, tucks his chin over his shoulder. Adam doesn't stop him. He's warm, his body fitting perfectly in the circle of Nigel's embrace. Adam sighs softly, and Nigel's heart almost fucking bursts when Adam lies back against his chest.

"They officially ended the mission the month before I turned eighteen, but Sojourner is still there."

Nigel frowns at that. "Well, that's shitty. Dead little robot, all alone on Mars?"

Adam giggles, his chest rising and falling sharply beneath Nigel's hands. Nigel takes a chance, nuzzles the crook of Adam's neck. Adam gasps a little, but still doesn't stop him. "It's just a machine, Nigel," he teases. "It's not *dead* any more than a faulty computer is dead."

"I know that, gorgeous. It's still a bit sad, though."

"And it's not alone, either. There are five other rovers on Mars' surface, not that it makes any difference to Sojourner." He moves, and Nigel worries for a second that he's going to pull away. But he just twists a little, just enough to smile up at the space between Nigel's eyebrows. "But who knows? Maybe we'll go get it, someday, and bring it back with us."

Son of a bitch, he's in fucking love again. "Yeah," he croaks, then coughs in a hopeless attempt to find his composure. "Yeah, maybe. Or maybe some fucking Martians will find it first."

It makes his nose wrinkle. "There's no one living on Mars."

"No?" He directs Adam's attention back to the sky. "You don't think there's anybody else out there?"

"I didn't say that," he huffs. "The conditions were right for Earth, they could be right somewhere else, too. Oh!" And then he's lighting up again, launching into another tangent. Nigel could sit here forever, he thinks.

"There's actually a theory that there may be some form of life on Titan, on of Saturn's moons. See, the Nitrogen in Titan's atmosphere provides the right conditions for methane to behave very similar to how water does on Earth. There are entire flowing rivers of liquid methane, and it rains methane there."

And there it is, again. Eyes on the stars, light in his voice, hands fluttering. It starts subtle, a gentle waving of his fingers, and it builds until his wrists are flapping. Adam doesn't even seem to notice.

"And if that wasn't promising enough on its own, we've recently discovered that fifty miles beneath Titan's surface, there's actually an entire subterranean ocean. There could be anything down there. Isn't that exciting?"

He knows he shouldn't. That it could wreck this pretty little moment they're sharing. He can't resist. "Can I ask you something, doll?"

Adam just hums.

"What's that fluttering thing you're doing with your hands?"

Nigel can feel how quickly his limbs wind up, turning tense in an instant. "Oh," Adam breathes, and his hands curl into tight fists.

Straight away, Nigel sets to soothing him. He rubs at Adam's arms, speaks soft and low. "Hey, it's okay, I was just asking. No need to get nervous."

"I don't always notice that I'm doing it," he mutters. "I'm sorry. It's just something I do when I – I'll pay more attention from now on, though."

It's instinctive, when he pulls Adam closer. That same over-protective bastard inside of him, demanding that he hold Adam as tight as he'll allow. "I'm just trying to get to know you, remember? 'It's something you do when' what? I wanna know."

Adam doesn't reply right away. His fists unfurl, curl up tight again, release.

"Do you know what stimming is?" he asks after a moment.

“Can’t say that I do,” Nigel replies. “But I’m a pretty fast learner.”

Adam nods sharply. “A lot of people assume that because I’m not always expressive, I must not have big emotions,” he explains. He sounds embarrassed, and it makes Nigel want to find every fucker on Earth who taught Adam to feel so self-conscious. “But that isn’t true at all. I feel things very deeply. And sometimes, the feelings are so intense that I have to do something physical to alleviate some of the pressure. Things like drumming on my desk when I’m frustrated, or making sounds when I’m under-stimulated.”

He breaks from Nigel’s hold, then, crossing his arms and making himself small. “I… I understand if you think it’s strange. Like I said, I didn’t notice I was doing it. I usually try to stop myself from stimming around other people, because it tends to make them uncomfortable. But I was having such a nice time, with you. I guess it just came out.”

“Adam…” Nigel sighs. He reaches out, places a hand on the other man’s shoulder. Adam turns, stares up at him with those big blue eyes.

“So, let me get this straight: You were moving your hands like that because you were too happy to keep it in? That’s what you’re saying it means?”

He bites his lip, nods.

Nigel smiles at him. “Then it’s the prettiest fucking thing I’ve ever seen somebody do.”

Adam’s eyes go wide. He freezes up, balking at him like Nigel just grew a second head. “Do you actually mean that, Nigel?”

The other man’s breath hitches when Nigel cups his face. It’s smooth, warm, soft. Gently, he guides Adam into a kiss. It’s slow. Nigel lingers, savoring. He’d been right, before, this kiss makes it clear. Adam Raki is fucking *special.*

Nigel doesn’t back away when it breaks, breathing his next words against Adam’s lips.

“Yeah. I really fucking do.”

Adam’s mouth splits into a wide grin. He’s like an angel. “Okay,” he whispers. “That − That means a lot to me, thank you.”

Nigel shrugs it off. “You don’t need to thank me, gorgeous, it’s just how I feel.” He sits back, glancing up at the night sky. “Now, did you have more you wanted to say about Titan?”

“Actually, I think I would prefer it if you just kissed me again, instead,” Adam says. “Is that alright?”

He laughs when Adam draws near, meeting him halfway and dragging him into a longer, less tentative kiss. When they finally part, Nigel opens his eyes to see pale fingers, fluttering in the light of the moon.

End Notes

thanks so much to arrnutsss, lexicons, kmac, rose, and all of my raindrops for your lovely support!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!